WZBC MAY

NEWSLETTER 05/2026

HAPPY SUMMER LISTENERS

whats in this edition?

- summer updates
- top tracks
- music recs
- & more!

W2BC DJ'ED @ ARTS FEST!

We had 8 hours of ZBC community-curated music across two days. Thank you to everyone who participated!

checking back in on our raffle winner... the concert was a huge success!

a haiku to lcd soundsystem:

three drum kits, nine synths
no phones while disco ball spins
i dance myself clean...

Norah Rogers / FM DJ

more digitizing parties to come this fall...

A Personally Definitive List of Some of the Best Opening Tracks in Music

John Meters / Community DJ (recent grad)

Originally written for the unrealized zine "Arc" ...

(picture this whilst reading)

Few things on this planet are more exciting than the birthing of a new zine. One of those things, however, is the beginning of a [new] album.

So, in this natal spirit, let's take a look at some of the best album openers in my humble, well-educated opinion.

RULES AND GUIDELINES (*as codified in the 2011 edition of Pitchfork's "Music Criticism Rulebook" under Rule 12A ("Ranked Lists"), Section V, article N, lines 25-29*)

1. **One song per artist**
2. **It must be the first song on the album**
3. **It must be a song**
4. **It must be able to be heard by ears.**
5. ~~**It should be by Fleet Foxes or Animal Collective***~~

Revised after the release of Centipede Hz. No one liked that album.

ONLY SHALLOW - MY BLOODY VALENTINE

I figured I'd get this one out of the way first, so let's get this one out of the way first. Literally not even one second into the song, and drummer Colm Ó Cíosóig (incredible name that is) has already seized us by our lobes and yanked us headfirst into one of the most energetic and face-melting openers in music history. Does Colm make this song? No, but it's interesting to note that this is the only track on *Loveless* where he does play live without aid from Kevin Shields's trusty drum machine (which will be featured in an interview within the next issue). For me, this song lives and dies by Shields's absolutely *vicious* guitar (yeah, guitar!) line in the "chorus" sections, which glides over Bilinda Butcher's (actually, also Shields's) ascending, trem-barred power chords. As he is wont to do, Shields layers effects and reversed overdubs on top of one another to create a tone that is *literally impossible* to replicate. Literally. Have you ever seen a video of them performing *Loveless* tracks live? It's a miracle that they can even come close to the studio version. Anyway, this isn't a ranked list but if it was I would comfortably place "Only Shallow" in the top spot. I kind of already did.

GRAPES - OVLOV

One could think of "Grapes" as "almost as good as 'Only Shallow' but not quite". That sounds negative, but let me explain. Explanation: This song shares a significant amount of DNA with our previous selection; Ovlov is a band who, from time to time, can wear their influences on their sleeve. Of course, MBV is one of several "shoegaze"(...) acts ostensibly worshipped (appreciated) by Ovlov and the like, and Grapes is one such track that best exemplifies this. Absurdly distorted guitar line soaring over muddy power chords? Check. Fraction-of-a-second spot of noise before the 'tars come in? Check. Buried, androgynous vocals? Check. First song on the album? That's a bit more of a nuanced issue, but my point is this: Despite how, on paper, this track can appear to be very derivative, it's still one of my favorite songs (not just opening tracks) of all time! There's still a heaping dose of originality that comes from Ovlov's post-hardcore and emo influence as well as their DIY charm. On top of that, this song is just *fucking good*, I like it, and I'd rather reduce my take to that than discuss genre because genres are *fucking stupid*.

PEACEBONE - ANIMAL COLLECTIVE

And so we escape the trappings of genre entirely with "Peacebone". Our previous two selections have been examples of songs that yank you by the collar with a great loud fist, obliterating your eardrums like tongues under hammers. While "Peacebone" remains an energetic and occasionally overwhelming track, it's on this list because of how well it sets the tone for the rest of *Strawberry Jam*. Opening with a bizarre, chippy synth line manipulated by Geologist (whose instrument is "knobs"), the Animal Collective invites us into the sometimes frightening, sometimes beautiful, sometimes heart-wrenching nostalgic world of their best (in John Meters's prideful opinion) project. "Peacebone" features all that makes this album great: true synth GOAT* Geologist's staccato, gated leads, Avey Tare's primal, childlike vocals, Panda Bear's subtly incredible drumming (really pay attention to it!) which gives us no indication of the song's proper time signature, and Deakin! Yes!

WE INVENT YOU - UNWOUND

Ahh, Unwound (1991-2091). You masters of tracklisting. This one's a bit of an outlier on this list due to its apparent lack of energy/punch-you-in-the-face-ness. Rather, in typically cynical fashion, the opener to Unwound's magnum opus holds up two middle fingers to the listener's ears, subjecting them to two straight minutes of A drone (as in, a droning A chord). The track serves not only as one of the best examples of a filter in music, but as a display of rare, unabashed confidence. Everyone in the band knew that *Leaves* was a staggering accomplishment, that it warranted its runtime, that it was a singular, flash-in-the-pan record, and it's evident from its opening seconds. Droning guitars, abstract (though notably not entirely nihilistic!) lyrics, and an incredible drum performance from Sara Lund (my personal GOAT) perfectly introduce us to the gloomy, mystical tone present throughout the entire album. And, as a bonus, We Invent You's leitmotif is revisited in the band's final transmission, the wonderfully irreverent Who Cares–a brilliantly "fuck you" closer to bookend this brilliantly "fuck you" album. Pretty sure there's no bass on this one, but they compensated for that by adding two (!) to Terminus.

I'm on the surface now
Nothing will be the same
Concentrate on this phrase
"Beyond this world, I live"

Come on, that's too cool.

SEAGULL - RIDE

Our final selection sends us back across the pond to hear arguably the greatest rhythm section in all of ... shoegaze. With their first few EPs, *Nowhere*, and *Going Blank Again*, the Riders brought us some of the most energetic and danceable music to come out of post-Smiths, post- Roses, post-C86, post-shithole Britain. All that is to say, these guys fucking *rocked*... and the opening track from 1990's *Nowhere* might be the best example of this. Admittedly it was a bit of a toss up between this and "Leave Them All Behind", but in the end, *obscurity wins* (our motto). I also like "Seagull" a good bit more. Anyway, onto the song itself. The band's namesake cymbal ushers this beast in, accompanied by swells of tremolo-ed feedback and a decidedly baggy baseline*. It's not long before the chiming guitars come screaming in atop one of the best fucking drum lines EVER!

Ride Man: "We need someone to play tambourine."
Loz: "My left foot's got that covered."

Seriously, Loz Colbert is like Reni 2.0; the man carries almost every Ride song ever made (pre 1992, of course–how many of you listened to anything after that?). Anyway, the energy continues and continues and continues to build as the song progresses until that explosive finale where we can hear every single member of the band abusing their instruments to the maximum degree. Ride has (in my humble, more educated opinion) always been great at ending songs; it's an underrated skill and something that helps cement them as one of the pillars of their assigned genre.

Honourable Mentions

ARCARSENAL - AT THE DRIVE IN Come get your ass kicked by Berklee prodigies.

RANDY DESCRIBED ETERNITY - BUILT TO SPILL Let a priest make you want to kill yourself.

A HOUSE WIFE LOVE SONG - STARFLYER 59 Let the owner of a trucking company make you want to kill yourself.

VALERIANS - KAIRON; IRSE! Do yourself a favor and only listen to this song; the rest of the album; doesn't; come; close.

DIRTY BOOTS - SONIC YOUTH Why didn't I put Teen Age Riot? Because Teen Age Riot is too popular.

FÜR IMMER - NEU Honestly, I could put this one on the main list– fucking kickass German Jam.

THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION SHOW - KILLING JOKE Yeah, I honestly just got really into KJ after I finished writing this. Expect something on them soon... maybe.

Do you like EDM?? Top Acts to See at Electric Forest 2026

For those looking to explore more electronic music this summer— or for those spending some time in the Midwest— Electric Forest's annual festival in Rothbury, Michigan, brings together world class musicians, interactive art installations, and a participatory, community-centered culture. Here are a few acts on the lineup this year you shouldn't miss!

The String Cheese Incident:

This band's original members initially joined together to share their love of skiing in Colorado. They began to play shows for ski towns— sometimes in exchange for lift tickets—and soon gained momentum to tour around the country. They added keyboard player Kyle Hollingsworth to mix in more of a bluegrass sound to their existing fusion of rock, jazz, and electronic songs. Choosing to make music on their own terms, the band created their own ticketing and merchandise companies as opposed to supporting big record labels. They've played almost every single year at Electric Forest, becoming known as a core component of the festival and representing a bridge between the EDM and jam music worlds.

Couch:

For those looking to support local bands, look no further than Couch, who formed as a group of high school students in the Greater Boston area. They continued to make music remotely after scattering to different colleges, producing singles and their debut EP without ever sharing a stage together. Once they reunited in person, they took off, touring around the country in 2022 and also choosing to produce and manage their own music. Their blend of soul, funk, jazz, and pop brings a homey and intimate feel to the rest of the festival.

GRiZ:

And for those looking for one of the most impressive electronic acts out there, make sure to see GRiZ. Raised in Michigan, GRiZ is known for performing live saxophone solos over his electronic tracks. He combines jazz sounds with heavy base and electro-soul, pioneering a genre known as "future funk." He's one of few queer role models in the mainstream EDM industry, using his platform to foster LGBTQ+ inclusive dance spaces, lead fundraising campaigns for nonprofits such as the It Gets Better Project, and raise awareness for queer mental health. He will bring some of the highest energy and one of the most welcoming communities to the festival this year.

And for those daunted by the ticket prices for events like these, make sure to check out their volunteer opportunities. They will often offer ticket exchanges for helping out with their green teams or other participating organizations :)

Liv Absey-Allen / General Manager

And here's what's happening at the Z over the summer...

During the summer, E-board members Grayson Weston, Jordan Manuel, and Julian Drury will be working at the station to assist in the creation of a digital catalogue for the station's extensive physical library.

Our process will involve assigning sticker combinations to each section of our vinyl library, ensuring easier data basing and cataloging for our future web index.

When we aren't addressing technical difficulties at the station you can listen to our shows, star tripping (Mondays 6pm), Uncut Gems (Thursdays 9am), and Wild Variety (Thursdays 7pm).

DJ Jules / Audio Engineer